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SUBJECT: H1N1 UPDATE: 6,062 CONFIRMED CASES

REF: A) Berlin 908, B) Berlin 906 and previous.

¶1. (U) UMMARY: The number of H1N1 infections in Germany rose by 738 cases to a total of 6,062 on July 31. The majority of new infections occurred abroad, mainly during travel to Spain. Family Ministry calls on statutory health insurance agencies to cover costs for flu vaccination in fall. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) At its July 31 press briefing, the National Reference Center for Influenza at the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) announced 738 new (laboratory and non-laboratory) confirmed cases of H1N1. This increases the total number of H1N1 cases to 6,062. New cases were distributed among twelve federal states: North Rhine-Westphalia (262), Lower-Saxony (112), Baden-Wuerttemberg (89), Bavaria (59), Rhineland-Palatinate (50), Hesse (47), Hamburg (38), Berlin (34), Schleswig-Holstein (21), Saxony (10), Brandenburg (12) and Bremen (4).

¶3. (U) According to RKI, the increase in the number of infections is mainly due to people returning from travel abroad (605 new cases which represents 81 percent), with most of the reported infections occurring while in Spain. Newly confirmed cases include laboratory-confirmed cases of H1N1 as well as non-laboratory-confirmed cases, mainly from people who have showed symptoms after being in contact with a patient who has been tested positive at a labor for the new virus. So far, all cases are reportedly mild.

¶4. (U) North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) remains the German state with the highest number of virus cases among all German states with a total of 2,446, followed by Lower-Saxony (1083) and Baden-Wuerttemberg (600 cases). Less than 22 percent (1284) of all confirmed infections in Germany have resulted from domestic transmission.

Dispute over Flu Shot Payment in Fall

¶5. (U) The Ministry for Family Affairs has called on the statutory health insurance agencies to pay for the mass flu vaccination in fall. Family Minister Ursula von der Leyen said "as long as the health insurance agencies gain a surplus in revenues, the money from the insurants has to be used to prevent an outbreak of the swine flu". "That's why we have

health insurance", the minister said. According to the Family Ministry, the health care stock has to be used for prophylaxis arguing that the vaccination of people will cost less than H1N1 treatment of people.

Flu's Impact on Current Events

¶6. (U) Federal health authorities have taken precautionary measures to prepare for mass events scheduled to take place in Germany. In preparation for the "Wacken Open Air", Schleswig-Holstein's health officials have advised visitors to abandon greeting rituals such as kisses to avoid a spread of the virus but also ensured pharmacies nearby the venue have enough antiviral medication on stock. Over 75,000 visitors are expected to attend the event which is considered to be the world's largest hard rock festival and will take place July 30-August 1, 2009. As reported in Ref 889, the Federal Ministry of Health indicted that Germany will consider cancelling mass gatherings to stem a H1N1 outbreak if the virus continuous to spread further.

BRADTKE